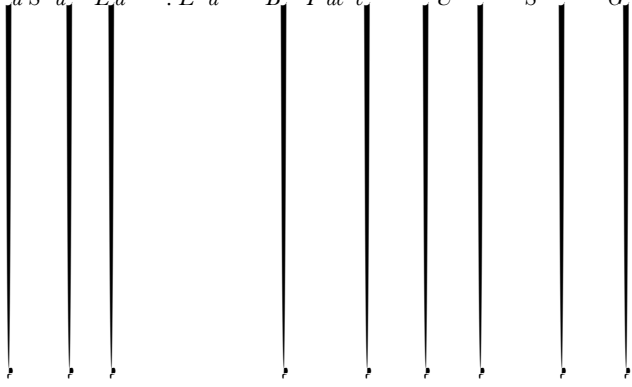E a dS d La : E a B P ac c U S G a

I explained that I would be keeping time on my watch to let students know when to move from one step to the next.

As I observed my students actively talking about points they noted on their index cards, I felt a great sense of relief. I knew there was a strong possibility that my students would avoid the entire discussion altogether. Providing a space for students to rehearse their thoughts and discussion points rather quickly in a written format seemed to prepare them for engaging in a courageous discussion with other students. As I circled the classroom to listen in on each group's meeting, students did talk about race. Several of my jottings include student statements:

I can't imagine having to walk into a courtroom to defend my marriage based on our skin color. It is truly awful!

I read a book over break that said, "love is love until it's not." During this time, love was love; unless it was between interracial couples, then it was illegal. I hate that anyone had to go through that and hate even more that people still experience these issues today.

I agree. This book made me even more aware of the racial issues in our country. I could never imagine not being able to marry someone simply based on the color of their skin! This doesn't make any sense.

This (interracial marriages being illegal) went on for too many years. People still have negative views towards interracial marriage. It is so important to talk and have these discussions.

As we finished our small group discussions, I asked the students to consider and reflect on their participation in this activity. Below are several excerpts representative of their feedback:

I like this (write-arounds) because you get to hear what your peers believe and their thoughts about it as well. I like how you can look back and take a moment to look at everything and write about your final thoughts and what you want to talk about. It really makes you think.

Shows different perspectives on a controversial topic that we might not be ready to talk about right away. Writing our thoughts down and then reading what other people wrote helped me think about what I wanted to point out when our group got the chance to talk.

I think this is a great method to integrate discussion into the classroom about things we don't normally talk about. It's a quiet activity, and <u>everyone</u> gets to use their "voice." It can also help connect students by sharing similar opinions.

The activity was interesting to see others' thoughts and ideas on the topic. This is a great way to get quiet students' voices heard because it is less confrontational than speaking up in class. It's a great activity for tough topics.

This activity is by no means limited to children's literature; it would be a purposeful exercise in any discipline